Sally Hirsch's Memory Book

In Dec 1998, granddaughter Marcey Nolan sent a copy of **"A Grandparents' Memory Book"** *to Marcella Marie ("Sally") Hirsch Armes, with the note: "To Grandma Sally – Thank you for sharing your memories with me and giving me so many special ones of my own. Love, Marcey." The book consisted of questions wanting answers about their grandparents' lives, as asked by 'real grandchildren.' In Dec 2003, Sally returned the book with this note: "Dear Marcey – I'm sorry to be sending you an unfinished book. I wrote in it a little when you first gave it to me and then it got put away somewhere. I had to search for it to write in it for Maggie & Alan's Christmas. My handwriting is so poor anymore that it isn't as nice as I would have liked. I wrote until I thought I'd better get it in the mail. I promise if you return it I will attempt to finish it as much as it applys to me at age 89 years. Marcey you have always been special to me. I love you dearly. Grandma." Here are the questions with answers as written by Sally Hirsch (Armes).*

Did you spend the night at your Grandma and Grandpa's house?

Yes, many times. My Grandma lived alone most of the time as my Grandpa was a insurance salesman & traveled all the time. I lived with her part of my freshman year in high school.

What is your fondest memory of Grandpa/Grandma?

When Grandpa would come home for a weekend was the best time of all. He was fun loving and would sing to us & play the violin. One song I remember was "Old Dan Tucker." He would tell us to jig & he would show us how. He liked it when we had a family get-together & all of his grandchildren were there. It was so special to get to spend time with Grandpa.

Grandma was a quiet, stern "old" lady. For as long as I could remember, she looked & acted "old." She had a pretty hard life. Her first husband died very young as did both of their young sons.

What did your grandparents do? (for a living)

My paternal grandfather was a carpenter. He lived in Missouri & we never visited in his home (which wasn't unusual in those days, as transportation was a problem). Grandma Hirsch was a housewife & home maker as most wives were. She died when my Dad was about 12 years. My maternal Grandpa was a traveling salesman & Grandma a house wife & home maker.

What is the best lesson you learned from your parents? What values that your parents taught you did you pass (or try to) on to your children?

My Dad would tell us to live by the golden rule. "Do onto others as you would have them do unto you." He said we would need no other law, no police, no one in authority over man if we lived by that rule.

As I recall most of our upbringing was left to my Mother and I believe that was the way it was in most family's back then.

Mama would encourage us to read. She loved to read and liked to read aloud to we children. Mama had a very hard life, and I think the only way she could escape was lose herself in books about other times & places. She was a school teacher before she married and she was very

good at writing poetry or stories. That is one trait that was passed on to me.

When were you born? Where were you born?

I was born at home on a farm in Boone County, Nebraska (section #15). The farm land in the mid-west states was divided up in sections. A full section was 640 acres. My Dad farmed a quarter section, plus 20 acres on a neighbor's land, 180 acres in all.

I was born November 30, 1914, the fourth child of Fred & Ellen Hirsch. Our family grew to include 10 children, 6 girls & 4 boys.

Were you named after anyone in particular? What is the story behind how you were named?

I was named Marcella Marie Hirsch. I was named after a great aunt, I never met her. She was my maternal Grandmother's sister.

I always liked my name but got the nick-name of Tootsie when I was small & later was called Sally & that name stuck. It made my mother sad to hear me called Sally. She loved my given name too.

Did you get along with your siblings? (Explain.)

As we were growing up I think we got along quite well. I dearly loved my older sister Eugenia, we called her Genia. She was 6 ½ yrs older than me. My brother Donald was 2 years older than me and I got along with him just so-so. I felt quite motherly to the three youngest as I did a lot of the care-taking of them.

In my teen years I didn't get along very well with my sister Genevieve (4 yrs younger than me.)

Did you have family activities you did together? (Explain.)

Sometimes after supper my Mother would gather us around the big dining room table & read to us. She would be reading from a library book and we always hated it when she would say continued until tomorrow night. Most of us were old enough that we could read but the way she did it was welcomed by all.

Where did you live when you were little?

I lived on a farm all of my younger years. I can recall three different homes, but I lived on the last farm from age 9 (I believe) until I graduated from high school. Some of the high school years I lived with my Grandmother (9th grade). The last 3 years I roomed in four different homes in the little town of St. Edward, Nebr. during the week.

Did you have a big backyard when you were little?

Since I lived on a farm we had a lot of room to roam & play. We had a huge grove of trees that bordered on the North of our farm. We made play houses in the trees by roping off rooms & raking the leaves. My sisters & I liked to play up there.

Did you have crayons?

Yes we had crayons but I think there were only 4 or 5 to a box. We treasured our crayons.

Did you have your own room when you were little?

No, I never had my own room. I shared a bedroom with my older sister Eugenia (Gena) until she left home and then I shared a room with Genevieve (Gen) & Mary. We slept three in a bed and had to take turns sleeping in the middle as that was the less desirable position.

Even today I sleep right on the edge of the bed even if I'm sleeping along. Grandpa Don could never understand why I used only the very edge of the bed.

Did you ever jump on your bed when you were little?

I suppose I did but I don't remember doing it.

Our beds didn't have much bounce as the mattresses were filled with corn husks or straw.

What was your favorite meal? Who fixed that meal?

My favorite meal was the special one that Mama fixed for Sunday's or for company. Fried chicken, mashed potatoes & gravy, creamed new peas, cabbage slaw, home make rolls and cherry pie.

Did you eat carrots when you were 7 years old?

I loved carrots and I liked to go out in the garden & pull up some carrots, rub the dirt off & eat them fresh.

Did you have popsicles when you were little?

No we didn't. I was just thinking it would be interesting to know when popsicles were first made.

Did you ever go out to dinner or did you eat at home?

If you mean going to eat in a restaurant, I believe I was in the eighth grade the first time I ate out.

For a long time I was very uneasy when eating in a restaurant. I was sure everyone was watching to see if I had good manners.

When we moved to Omaha (after I was married) we could go to the 5 and dime store & get a hot dog or burger and eat standing at the eating counter.

What did you look like when you were little?

I have been told I was a nice looking little girl. I had blondish hair and gray blue eyes. Mostly when anyone spoke of my looks they always said what beautiful eyes I had.

When a teen age, I worried because my nose was too big. When I got my first eye glasses in 1945 (age 31), the eye Doctor said it's a shame to put glasses over your beautiful big eyes. When Beth was born, I said "she has my eyes."

Did you ever play card games? (Which ones?)

I recall playing a card game called "canasta." I don't remember now how to play it.

My Dad liked to play "pitch" and he taught the boys how to play it. They also played cribbage with a deck of cards & a cribbage board.

What did you do for fun? Did you run, did you jump and play?

Having so many brothers & sisters made it a great time for outdoor games. We played hide & seek a lot and I remember one summer evening's game especially. I was the seeker and had caught everyone except my brother Donald. He fooled all of us. He had climbed up on the roof of our house and sat hugging the chimney. The best hiding place ever.

Did you play any sports? (Tell me about them.)

In country school we played lots of out door games. It seems we always had a baseball game going & continued it in to successive recesses or lunch time.

In high school I played soft ball, basketball, tennis & archery. I didn't have a tennis rackdt so had to borrow one as well as a bow & arrow. The school didn't furnish equipment as they do now.

What kind of kid were you? Did you stay inside or play and build forts and things?

I liked playing outdoors. The weather dictated what and where we played. In the winter we took our sleds to "Sedlicks" hill for some great rides. My brother would have me lay on the sled on my stomach & he would [start] pushing & when he got up a good speed he would flop down on top & we would take a fast trip.

In the summer running & playing many games took up our days.

How did you make friends?

I never thought about making friends. It just came naturally that our classmates became friends as did our neighbors.

There wasn't the class nor race distinction that we see today. We did have 2 Polish families in our school but there was no anti-feeling towards them.

Farmers were all poor to middle class folks.

Did you ever do anything really bad when you were a kid? If so, what was it?

I don't remember doing anything really bad. Maybe the story <u>below</u> counts as really bad.

What pranks do you remember from childhood?

One time when our city cousins came we decided we would have a "black face" play. We got into the stored lard (we had a room upstairs where we stored food, lard, 10 gal. tubs of sausage, etc., etc.)

We smeared the greasy lard on our faces, we got soot from the chimney and smeared it on our faces and pretended we were negroes.

Mama said later that she had an awful time getting the soot & lard out of our skin & hair. She was very upset with us, but we had company so she was nice about it.

Did you and my parents ever fight as bad as me and my parents?

I imagine we had many arguments. I wouldn't call it a "fight."

Were you happy as a kid?

I believe I was quite happy. When you are in a large family you always had someone to play with. We made up games to play or made toys to play with.

What was the greatest hardship you endured as a child?

Being raised during the depression years there were probably many hardships. But everyone was quite poor then so we didn't really feel any difference.

I always wished we had a piano or victrola for music, but my Dad didn't believe in spending money for something foolish.

Who was your childhood hero? Why?

I believe my "Aunt Edie" was my hero. She would take a couple of us kids home with her and it was a great time. She had a daughter "Twlya" just my age and she would make us dresses alike. Then she would take us to the candy store for treats. She took us to the library where we could borrow books to read. She would make us a tea party etc. etc. etc.

What kind of pets did you have when you were younger?

I was given a little puppy when I was six years old. My Uncle George Kealy came to see me when I came home after being in the hospital when I broke my arm. I called her "PUPPY." I was so proud that she was mine.

She lived to be quite old.

What did you always want to be when you "grow up"? What did you turn out to be?

I loved the nurses who worked in the hospital where I was taken when I broke my arm. They really impressed me, so I wanted to grow up to be just like them.

Since I grew up during the great depression, there was no money for a college for nurses so I couldn't be a nurse.

My occupation turned out to be a wife & Mother. This was the best and I was very happy with this job.

What did you do at your house for Thanksgiving? What are some of the favorite foods at Thanksgiving? Maybe cranberries, bread, turkey, mashed potatoes or gravy?

At Thanksgiving time we had a special meal but we didn't have turkey. We would have a roast chicken and oyster dressing. Of course we had mashed potatoes & gravy, cole slaw, cranberries etc. Oh yes, pumpkin pie. (My Mom was a good cook.)

Donald
4 yrs
Gerald
6 yrs
Eugenia
8 yrs
Sally
2 yrs